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Natural History Museum Library



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27 January 1982

A.E.Gunther  
35 Rudall Crescent  
Hampstead  
N.W. 3

Note to Mr. Harvey,  
From A.E.Gunther

I wish to offer the Museum the following for its Library:

- Poles, Stephan 1875 The Actual Condition of the British Museum.  
H.S.Warr, High Holborn.  
Original copy from library of Albert Gunther.  
Museum have a xerox of this rare work.  
Ref. in BM. Cat.
- Frank Bowcher 1912 Sculptor who made medallions both of  
Letter of 1912. T.H.Huxley and of Albert Gunther, see  
Gunther, A.E. 1975 Century of Zoology, 445.
- Underwood, E. Ashworth, 1978. The First and Final Phases of the  
Irish Medical Students at the University of  
Leyden... Dublin (RCST) 1978 pp.5 - 42.  
inscribed to A.E.G.

The Museum should have Underwood's Boerhaave's Men, Edinburgh  
1977 and my copy could later be available  
if asked for. See my Maty paper.

Attached, 3 letters.

AE Gunther -

27 January 1982

Note to Mr. Harvey,  
From A.M. Gunther

I wish to offer the Museum

Polio, Stephen 1875  
The Actual  
A. B. Watt

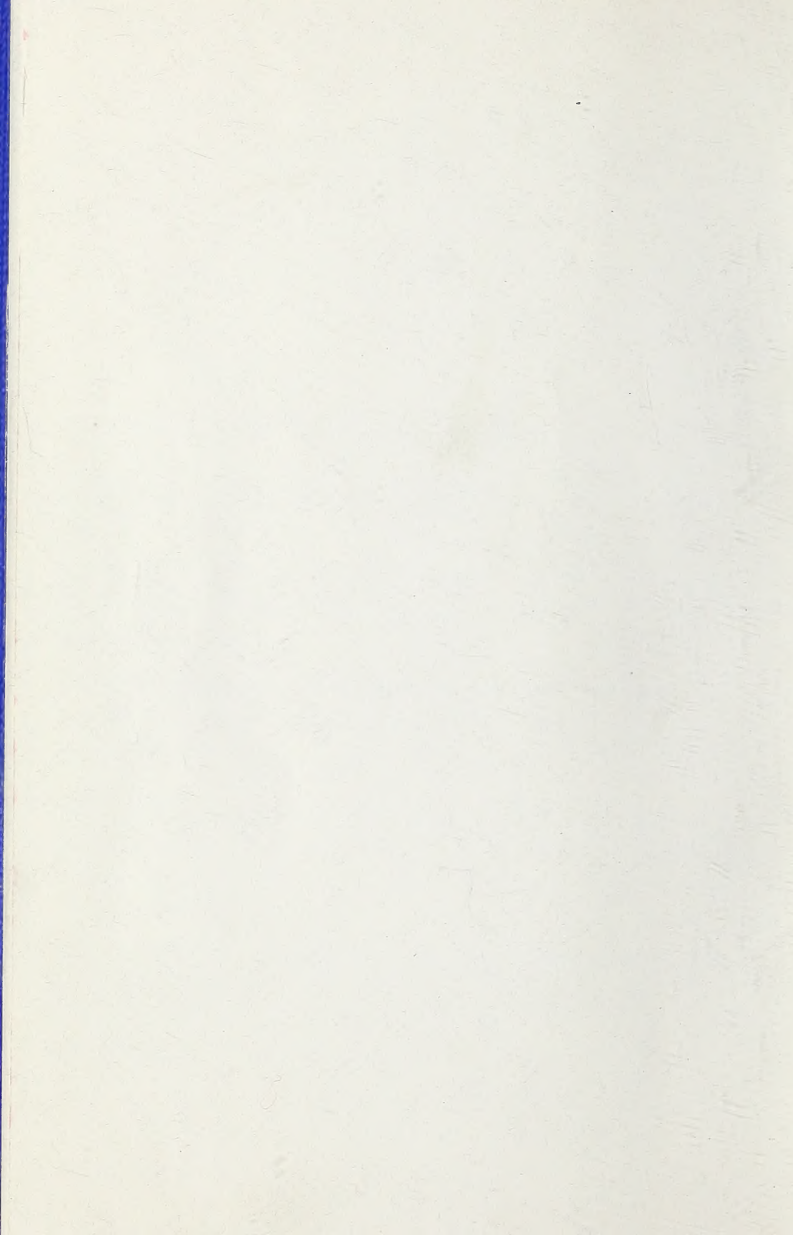
Original  
to the Museum  
Ref. in B.

Frank Bowcher 1912  
Letter of 1912  
A. M. Gunther

Underwood, E. Ashworth, 1938  
to University and to British Library  
24 - 5.42 8.71 (W. 1938)  
inscribed

The Museum should have under  
also have as total 1197 and a  
properly it asked  
Attached, 5 letters





THE  
ACTUAL CONDITION  
OF THE  
BRITISH MUSEUM  
BY  
STEFAN POLES.



*Albert Everard Gunther*

*ex Libris - Albert C.L.G. Gunther*

ex-libria Albert Smith



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THE ACTUAL CONDITION  
OF THE  
BRITISH MUSEUM.

A LITERARY EXPOSTULATION.

BY

STEFAN POLES.



LONDON:  
HENRY SIDNEY WARR,  
63, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.  
AND OF ALL NEWSVENDORS.

PUBLISHED BY STEFAN POLES.

1875.

PRICE ONE SHILLING—POST-FREE.

PRINTED BY  
JAMES W. ALLINGHAM, 29, FARRINGTON STREET  
LONDON E.C.

## INTRODUCTION.

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IN the following pages I have endeavoured to point out, in as plain and straightforward language as I had at my command, the principal abuses and diseases which choke the life of the most glorious of English Institutions. The plan of my proceeding has been : First, to point out how I came to write on the subject ; next, the great scandal of the Den which encouraged me to put my remarks forward ; then, in their turns, the abuses of place and patronage, the mismanagement, and the waste of public money which disgrace the Museum. More time and greater facilities for inquiry might have rendered the work more perfect, but in matters of this kind much depends on “striking while the iron is hot.” Conscious of my own lack of authority I have freely used the support of others, and have to acknowledge with gratitude the insight to be derived from a late article by the Rev. H. R. Haweis in the *Contemporary Review*.

STEFAN POLES.

London,

15th February, 1875.





# THE ACTUAL CONDITION OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

A LITERARY EXPOSTULATION.

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WITH the possible exception of the Vatican the British Museum has probably the most glorious and valuable library in the world ; and, it may be by contagion of coincidences, the two institutions vie with each other in decrees hostile to progress and enlightenment. Mr. Gladstone seems fully competent to deal with the Vatican, though it would seem to be only lately that he has discovered the error of its ways. But as Mr. Gladstone had special reasons for investigating the question—"Are these propositions proper to be set forth by the present writer?"—so perhaps it may be well for a foreigner to explain how it is that he appears as a critic of the British Museum.

Thanks to the genial nature of Englishmen, there is no land in which a man may so soon find himself at home as in England, and the first privilege of an acclimatised

foreigner—one who finds himself in this country with the intention of making it his home—is to have the whole of the literature of the world placed at his disposal, so soon as he can find some person to guarantee that he will not abuse it. Will Englishmen complain if the second privilege claimed should be, that so dear to themselves, of correcting a public abuse by a public complaint?

The events which led to the investigations made public in the following pages may be the more quickly disposed of because, though of public interest, they were in themselves accidental and personal, and certainly involve no hostility to so splendid an institution as the British Museum—an institution whose value I am better able than many men to comprehend. For I have known what it is to see for long months nothing but the bare walls of a narrow prisoner's cell, not even enlivened by a last year's almanack, or such an old newspaper cutting as that to which Tetterby used to appeal to demonstrate the viciousness of the poor. At such times a man has two thoughts: first, "How shall I regain my liberty?"—second, "What use shall I make of freedom?" The latter leads to dreams, his only consolation, and in my den in Versailles—narrower even and more pestilential if possible than some that I shall have here to describe—debarred the company even of an unfinished catalogue, many were the glorious visions which I indulged in of orgies of Shakespeare, Goethe, Mickiewicz, Novalis, Tégner, Lenau, Calderon, and Lope da Vega! And so it was that when free and in England, which means a reduplicated freedom, I turned my steps at once to the British Museum. Englishmen may smile, but those who can put themselves in my place will hardly wonder when I say that my first visit was one of simple reverence. I heeded not the hot, dry, stuffy air of the Reading Room. For me that great dome covered

a temple, the worshippers in which were some themselves worthy of worship. Very soon I became familiar with the place where the best treasures of the language, which was henceforth to be to me as my own, were unfolded to me without restraint—the dainty, quaint humour of Chaucer, the vigour of Marlow, the steel polish of De Quincey, and the secret treasures of Blake. In revelling in these one had hardly time to notice occasional rumours that all was not quite as it should be in this grand institution—that certain heads of departments were not always competent or even conscientious; that readers were not invariably treated with courtesy by the chief librarian; that attendants were often subject to injustice from official martinets; that some of the best workers in the Library had been killed, and that others were invalided by a system which was the offspring of ignorance and indolence, fostered by deliberate neglect, and supported by a spirit of personal jealousy, favouritism, and spite; and, lastly, that the money of the public at large was disgracefully squandered. These are very hard words, but they will be amply justified before the subject is exhausted. However, I was soon rudely awakened. A pamphlet, written by some persons claiming to be Polish patriots, and containing the filthiest libels on me, was circulated in London during my summer holiday of last year. Without a publisher's or printer's name, it was issued from the printing-presses of Messrs. Gilbert and Rivington, and although such a publication was wholly illegal, and could not come into the British Museum except by deliberate fraud or culpable neglect, a copy was introduced by an official named Naake, who abused his position to foist it into the Library without check or control from his superiors. On my return I obtained the conviction of the principal offenders in the Central Criminal Court, but I was very

loth to drag the British Museum into the indictment by including one of its recognised officials. I laid the matter before the Trustees, who courteously referred me to Mr. Winter Jones, the Chief Librarian.

Readers who will refer to Appendix A will see that Mr. Jones admitted the libellous nature of the pamphlet, admitted its irregular introduction, and himself committed the further irregularity of keeping it from any reader who might desire to see it, but, as soon as the need for temporising was over, deliberately washed his hands of the whole matter, and refused even the justice of an inquiry. This incident it was that awakened suspicions in me of the incompetence and jobbery which must characterise the management of the literary department of the Museum, whose Chief would thus openly protect a slanderer and perjurer. Still, for a foreigner to lift up his voice alone would have been in questionable taste, and very difficult. I know something, unfortunately, about lawyers' bills and lawyers' "six-and-eights"! But of late there have been Englishmen, who have found it impossible to hold their tongues concerning the abuse to be found rife in this which should be the proudest of their institutions, and the next few pages will show what they have said; how the worst of their charges falls short of the truth; what is the real hidden canker at the core of all, and how its removal might benefit the nation at large.

There is hardly a newspaper in England which has not within the past few weeks had occasion to comment on the death of the able and hardworking Mr. Warren, killed by the bad air of the den in which he worked; but few of them have ventured to speak of the coarse and cruel treatment which only too faithfully followed the efficient precedent set in the case of the famous Oriental student Mr. Deutsch, who was also slowly murdered by the studied malice, and the

petty jealousy of officials who were his superiors in rank, and who chafed at the knowledge that they were in every other respect immeasurably below him. That the health of Mr. Deutsch was undermined by the pestilential atmosphere of the place in which he was compelled to work is not denied, but this might have been brought about by mere ignorance. The gist of the complaint in his case is, that long after the prime cause of his maladies was ascertained, and while even yet there was a possibility of prolonging his life, while the Trustees were most anxious about him, and most courteous to him, he was systematically snubbed, his health and comfort were wholly disregarded, and he was denied even ordinary courtesies, by the two men Messrs. Jones and Rye, under whom he was condemned to serve. Towards the end of his life he ought to have been sitting beside a fire. Cold, and especially cold draughts, were fatal to him. And he ought to have had a cup of hot tea or a basin of broth whenever he wanted it, but all this was denied him. He sat shivering in the cold, with no fire to warm himself at, the chill draughts causing him the intensest suffering. Those sufferings might have been mitigated could he have closed the doors which are intended to cut off the bitter winds. But Mr. Jones and Mr. Rye had ordered them to be kept open. The inmates of the Library are tortured, but they dare not close the open doors which cause their torments.

The case of Mr. Warren brings out even more emphatically not only the bad system of ventilation in the Museum, but also the offensive treatment of scholars and gentlemen by uneducated and incompetent men placed in positions of authority. Mr. Warren was one of the ablest and most industrious men in the Museum. He stood always most high in the opinion of Signor Panizzi, who, however much we may grudge the reward he paid for the

servile adherence of Mr. Jones by recommending him to the Trustees as his successor, was eager to discern a quick worker. Mr. Warren was indeed but thirty-eight years old when he died, but he had spent twenty years of his life in the service of the public in the British Museum. For some years before his death the atmosphere in which he worked had begun to affect his constitution. He often complained of the state of the den in which he sat, and he was not alone in his complaints. For a long time all complaints met with the same answer either from Mr. Jones or from his friend, Mr. Rye, (the keeper of printed books). That answer was "that the room was quite healthy, that all ideas to the contrary were a delusion." At length Mr. Warren's doctor, who was puzzled by his case, visited the Museum, saw the room, and pronounced it unfit to live in. Mr. Warren then, brim full of hope, at once went off to Mr. Jones and told him the doctor's opinion. Now, how did the polished, considerate, and gentlemanly Mr. Jones receive him? Why, thus. He heard him to the end, and then exclaimed with a burst of rage: "How dare you bring a medical man into the Museum without the leave of the Trustees!" For this brutal piece of ill-breeding Mr. Jones never uttered a word of apology. However, a man fights hard who fights for life, and by dint of infinite importunity Mr. Jones was prevailed upon to allow a window to be cut in Mr. Warren's den. It may here be stated as an illustration of the Chief Librarian's intelligent zeal for high art, that he long resisted this step on the ground that "it would interfere with the architecture." *The wall in question was a dead brick wall.* Fancy this squeamishness in a building the whole facade of which is disfigured by wooden penthouses tarred to keep out the wet. At last the window was cut. The foul air was got rid of, but the cold down-draughts became

stronger and more deadly. No further redress was obtainable; and poor Warren, acknowledging his death-warrant, used to say, as Deutsch had often said before him: "When I die something may yet be done." Then came pleurisy, pneumonia, and bronchitis in quick succession, and being too weak to shake them off, he died. Dr. Hullet Brown, of 55, Gordon Square, who attended Mr. Warren in his illness, and made the famous expedition to the den, is witness whether we have told his story truly. Indeed, the story has never been questioned for a moment, except in a double-edged paragraph furnished by Mr. John Cleave, (Accountant of the British Museum), to the *Civilian*, Dec. 5, 1874. That paragraph said:

"Our contemporaries, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Globe*, are in error in attributing Mr. Warren's death to the imperfect ventilation of the room in which he was employed. It is true that the ventilation is supposed not to be perfect, and is also true that *very many years ago*, he induced his medical adviser to report on the sanitary condition of the department. The fact is, Mr. Warren had every concession made to him. He really fell a victim to hard work performed outside of the department, and which he was compelled to undertake, with a view to supplement the wretched salary he received from the Museum."

This paragraph had two objects. First, to absolve Mr. Jones and Mr. Rye from blame, and, second, to make a hit against those who, by refusing to increase the Museum salaries, had inflicted personal injury on them and their satellites. However, in three weeks the *Civilian*, a fair and honourable advocate of the cause of subordinates against officialism, frankly published the following corrections (Dec. 26, 1874):

"We have to withdraw, in the most complete manner, a statement made by us, some weeks since to the effect that Mr. Warren died from the effects of excessive unofficial labour, which he was compelled to undertake in consequence of his small salary from the British Museum. We deeply regret that we were induced to publish a statement which has caused much pain to the bereaved relatives of our late colleague."

So there was an end to that attempt of falsification.

And were Messrs. Deutsch or Warren exceptionally unhealthy? By no means; for in the underground Den in which Mr. Warren sat, now sit about ten young gentlemen, and about as many more attendants. They all complain bitterly of the total want of consideration shown to them. Some of them suffer acutely from the atmosphere. Two are patients of Dr. Andrew Clark (Mr. Dorset Eccles and Mr. Saunders). This well known enemy of disease can say what he thinks about the effects of the stifling air, the cutting draughts, upon their health. Mr. Aldrich, the successor of Mr. Warren, is laid up already with acute rheumatism, and as late as the 3rd inst. (3rd February) three young gentlemen left on sick leave—transcribers only, but men of talent and learning. One of the three is Mr. Gosse, the fine art contributor to the *Academy*. An attempt is being made just now to mitigate the draughts by putting up screens, but nothing short of scientific ventilation will serve to make the room healthy. Formerly the transcribers all sat upstairs, *i.e.*, on the ordinary ground-floor level; and there is no reason, except Mr. Jones' and Mr. Rye's officialism, why they should not sit upstairs now. A year or two ago, when as yet the Den had no window, and absolutely reeked with foul odours, they were allowed to come upstairs for a time, but a certain Mr. G. W. Porter (an Assistant Keeper at £450 a year, by virtue of his merits as cousin to Mr. Jones) objected to allowing them so much liberty. A distinction was, he thought, to be made between men of talent and learning and simple transcribers, who, as mere workmen, had obviously no claim to enjoy the upper air. So down they had to go again to work in the mines, and console themselves as best they could with mild and innocent jokes concerning the pompous little Porter, who thinks no small beer of himself; but who has a head of froth, and a fine property

at Colney Hatch, to which locality they wish he would retire.

All these pestilential corners are under the full and direct control of Mr. Rye, the Head of the Printed Department, a position to which he has been raised over the heads of men of superior merit and longer service, and for which he has no qualification except that of having been an attorney's clerk in the same office in which Mr. Jones held a similar position. He is a man who seems to like nobody and whom nobody likes; but he works very well with Mr. Jones, for they are kindred spirits, and are cordially hated by all except their few spies, whose real opinions about them it is hardly worth while to ascertain. He is a man who never knew, could never comprehend, the advantages of gaining the sympathies of the weak. The weak! Why do we feel for them? They are the prime cause and perpetual nourishment of self-denial and devotion. A really "picked man" at the head of so eminent a department would have been the living embodiment of care for the welfare of all committed to his charge. For a strong man who is right-minded, the weak are a source of pleasure, and there are times, too, when they may even be useful. A big ship never puts to sea without a complement of small boats, and on an emergency one has need of them. Can Mr. Jones or Mr. Rye now save themselves by the good will of their subordinates? Mr. Rye, by virtue of his office, has all the transcribers in the Dens under his command, and it has been in his power at any time to order them to sit in the comparatively purer atmosphere upstairs; but he has not done it, and so, in spite of all that has been written on the subject, there they sit still. I saw them there myself, and smelt the filth of their abode, no later than Friday last (5th February). Let me here say that my visit to the Den was an elaborate

ceremony. I made my application in all humility, and after a delay of nearly a quarter of an hour (almost as if I had been an unexpected Trustee), I was ushered down by Mr. E. A. Roy (Assistant-Turnkey). As we approached the dungeons, a steam pipe, which had most unfortunately and *conveniently* broken, flooded the sliced compartments with an odour not familiar to Mr. E. A. Roy's nose. Because he remarked upon it, I knew it could not be usual, and therefore awaited the normal stench further on, granting the steam as an extra in honour of my visit. The dungeons themselves I found decorated with what I first thought to be little flags, in compliment to the first mortal who, being neither trustee nor official, was allowed to visit the place; but these afterwards turned out to be little weathercocks to show which way the particular draught of the moment happened to be blowing—whether in the direction of rheumatism, suffocation, or toothache. Whichever way it came it bore the scent of rotting morocco and an indescribable odour, familiar in foreign barracks.

I spoke to one over-worked assistant, offering him a fair and not encouraging assessment of his life chances, based on a calculation of the length of his service, and the direction of the weathercock under which he sat. A snub from Mr. Roy eventually prevented the unfortunate man from giving me any intelligible answer. But I learnt his name; he is one of Dr. Andrew Clark's two patients. Poor young man! he looks pale and yellow and ruined in health! I was shown by the assistant-turnkey two specimen old gentlemen attendants, kept in a separate slice of the Den, apparently to demonstrate its invigorating powers by the fact that they either eat or chew the cud in it. Mr. Roy drew my attention to this astounding fact; but, after touching one of the men

to see if he was artificial, I came to the conclusion that it was just possible that these two poor gentlemen were either too feeble to crawl upstairs, or had been improvised, like the model painted villages in the Crimea when visited by Catherine II., to make a show of happiness and prosperity under adverse circumstances,—perhaps not adverse after all, for Elizabeth Barrett Browning has observed that you raise your best tulips out of dunghills; and may not Mr. Jones be the new nursery gardener who hopes to cultivate Genius in an atmosphere of physical and moral corruption!

While on this subject, we may quote from the *Echo* of last December 12th, a paragraph describing an inspection of the Den by Trustees:—

“A cry of despair from the junior assistants in the early summer of the present year brought down some of the Trustees of the building—the Duke of Somerset, Lord Granville, and others—to inspect their rooms. It was summer. Due notice having been given, the room was well aired. The Trustees were charmed. A healthy man was produced and was questioned. The Trustees were still more charmed, forgetting, probably, that on entering the Museum every *employé's* tongue is tied, and that he dare not give evidence. Was nothing done? Nothing seemed necessary. Well-aired room, healthy, contented men, respectful officials.”

That is just the point. No one has a word to say against the Trustees, except that they are generally men with a good deal of other business to attend to. They conscientiously try to do their duty, but they are systematically deceived in this way by such men as Mr. Jones and Mr. Rye. Is it possible that a man, known to have perpetrated such an insult as a deliberate deception on the Trustees, can retain his position for a day? For a man who would do such a thing once, will be always doing it. Indeed the *World*, the other day, in an article, in which it happily described Mr. Jones as “Jack in Office,” had the following significant paragraph on this very point:

Our friend in the Museum informed us that whenever the Trustees are expected to walk throughout the building on one of their periodical visits of inspection—we do not know how often these take place—Mr. Jones sends a preparatory message to the effect that every *employé* is ‘to come clean,’ to be in his place all day, and to keep his desk clear of all incumbrance. We are also told that whenever a Trustee is seen to enter a building, he is instantly followed about by the same zealous Jones. Now let us recommend the Trustees, especially those who do not often attend to their trust, to pay an occasional visit *incog.*; to get into conversation, not with the smuggest, but with the brightest-looking officials; and to try to find out for themselves if the annual £100,000 voted by Parliament is expended in the best interests of the public paymaster.”

Now a man who calls a spade a spade can describe this conduct only in one way. It is a system of habitual lying practised in order to hoodwink the Trustees, and keep them in ignorance of all that it most concerns them to know.

And now let us continue our list of the killed and wounded.

Since Mr. Warren’s death, another case of suffering has come prominently forward. An assistant in the library, the Rev. F. Laughlin, has long been suffering from one of the complaints so common in the Museum—a vesical disorder—and has throughout suffered much and complained bitterly of the cold and the draughts in the Library. He sat in the seat next to that occupied by Mr. Deutsch. He suffered as Mr. Deutsch did from cold and from the impossibility (without going outside the building) of getting even a cup of tea. Some weeks ago he was taken home very seriously ill.

Some years ago an assistant, named Pinto, died of a broken heart. A little before his death, Mr. Jones and Mr. Rye whom he had offended, had him up before the Trustees for an erasure in his diary. He had always been most regular and steady. At the time of being had up he was hopelessly ill; but Mr. Jones and Mr. Rye caused him to be suspended for a month. It broke his heart: soon after he died.

If the assistants have hitherto been unable to make their voices heard, it may be supposed that the attendants have been kept mute. But that does not prove that they have not suffered. As a general rule, they die, and the world knows nothing of their sufferings. Here is a typical case: An elderly man, named Knight, formerly a sailor, has long stood sentry at the door on the right-hand side of the Reading Room, leading into the Iron-work Library. There he has been exposed to the full force of the cutting draughts. No one who passed could fail to see that his position was a very painful one. Of the draughts to which he was exposed he complained to anyone who would listen to him; but no notice was ever taken, except that Mr. Rye seeing the great coat he had hung over his chair to screen his loins a little, wished to take it away, saying it did not "look nice." At length Mr. Cowtan, of the Printed Book Department, expostulated with Mr. Jones on the subject. Mr. Jones, whose thick skin had just begun to feel the arrows of outside criticism, finally consented to have a porter's chair put up for the sufferer. But his scruples were overcome too late; for meantime the sufferer had to be taken home, where, having undergone two lithotomic operations, he lies on which may not unlikely prove his death-bed.

Numbers of similar cases will most likely crop up if men once dare to speak.

Into the whole subject of the management of the Printed Book Department a searching investigation should be made. It is said that not only are lives unnecessarily sacrificed, but the public money is scandalously wasted. There are men in the Department whose names are a guarantee for scholarship and accuracy. Let them be asked what is their opinion of what is going on daily around them. It is no use asking the small circle of jobbers, who

are closely linked together. Mr. Rye, the keeper of the Department, is Mr. Jones's most intimate friend ; Mr. Porter, the second assistant-keeper, is Mr. Jones's cousin ; Mr. Graves, who acts virtually as Mr. Rye's private secretary, is Mr. Jones's godson. But ask Mr. C. T. Newton, M.A., the great scholar, Keeper of the Greek and Roman Antiquities, or ask Mr. W. A. Franks, M.A., P.S.A., or Mr. E. A. Bond, M.A., or Mr. P. H. Rieu, Ph. D., or Mr. George Wm. Reid, F.S.A., or Professor Richard Owen, F.R.S., or Professor Maskelyne, F.R.S., or Mr. Samuel Birch, LL.D., all heads of Departments ; or ask Professor William Wright, of Cambridge, or Mr. R. H. Holmes, the Queen's Librarian, or Mr. Campbell Clarke, the able Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, or the Rev. McCaul, the Lord Mayor's Chaplain. All of these gentlemen have been in the British Museum, and all of them were, no doubt, thankful to shake the dust of it off their feet on leaving. Or ask Mr. Bullen, the senior assistant-keeper, whose knowledge of Literature and Languages is altogether unrivalled here ; or ask among the assistants any one whose name is at all known as that of a scholar, Mr. Douglas, Professor of Chinese at King's College ; W. R. S. Ralston, Ilchester Lecturer at Oxford ; Dr. Haas, the Orientalist ; Mr. Russell Martineau, long a Professor of Hebrew ; Mr. Granville, of the Reading-Room ; Mr. Richard Garnett, a man of letters, who ought to have been born in the time of Virgil—all officers of the Printed Book Department—what they think of the management of their Department. Any one or all of these would probably answer that it is disastrously worked, that the *employés* are ill-treated, and the public money wasted.

In effect the rule of Jones is that of a kind of literary Mrs. Squeers. He governs by a system of terrorism, directed against subordinates, and by petty persecution

and jealousy he baffles the efforts of better men. Such mediocrities—to use a mild word—as Mr. Rye, Mr. Porter, and Mr. Roy are brought to the front, but what claims have they compared with eminent men like the above-named ? For the way in which the efforts of the better men are baffled one may take such an instance as this :—Mr. Ralston, Ilchester lecturer at Oxford, is known to be a good Slavonic Scholar. Mr. Porter studies Russian, and acquires a smattering of it. The scholar wishes to put the Slavonian books in order. “No, thank you, Mr. Porter will do it ;” and the task is given to the mediocrity who learned the Russian alphabet for the purpose. Again, various recommendations were made by the learned and accomplished Mr. Newton in reference to the excavations of Ephesus ; but these, together with other suggestions from the same source, were thwarted by Mr. Jones on one pretext or another. If there is one man in the world whose archæological knowledge ought to be respected it is Mr. Newton’s. How galling to a man of his eminence to be at the mercy of the jealous bitterness of a Mr. Jones !

I shall endeavour to shew proof in support of three of the propositions above hinted at—First, that the Library is managed by a clique of jobbing ignoramuses ; Second, that these gentlemen do, in fact, manage as badly as might be expected ; and Third, that the public money is scandalously wasted.

## I. THE CLIQUE.

These are men whose names have appeared in previous pages. They are Messrs. Jones, Rye, Porter and Taylor, and to these we may add Mr. Fagan and Teophilus Naake, the perjurer, as specimens of the patronage of the clique.

Signor Panizzi was a Librarian in every way superior to Mr. Jones, but withal had a mind cast somewhat in the same mould. Mr. Jones was a great favourite with him, and to him he practically bequeathed his place. Mr. Jones' education was that of an average attorney's clerk, and he has not the natural ability which might enable him to rise to any position above that for which he was originally intended. From a literary point of view he has no right whatever to hold the high position of Principal Librarian to the British Museum, and, as matter of fact, foreign savans coming to England find their way not to the Principal Librarian with his £1,200 a year, but to comparatively humble Mr. Newton with £600, or to Mr. Birch, to Mr. Franks, or to Mr. Bullen. The Catalogue of the British Museum, such as it is, gives the name of Winter Jones as an author, in connection with the following portentous heading—

Academies.—Europe.—Great Britain and Ireland.

London.—*British Museum.*

This seems to promise well, but a closer inspection shows that the books mentioned are all merely handbooks to various Departments of the Museum, compiled by subordinates, and merely edited with prefaces by Mr. Jones. The single really original work is a "Translation of all the Latin and other quotations in Blackstone's Commentaries," just the sort of book we should expect from a *parvenu* attorney's clerk anxious to see himself in print, but a work of which few but Mr. Jones himself ever saw the need. Turning over its pages we find such enlightening translations as *Quia emptores*, "Because purchasers," and "*Nisi prius*," "unless before." The author of a work like this, and of no other worth speaking of, can hardly be said even to have won

his spurs in literature, still less to be an *emeritus*, and worthy of the post he holds. And this is the man who for years—that is to say till poor Deutsch's death—resisted all efforts of the Trustees to get the learned author of the famous Essay on the Talmud, an assistant keepership of Oriental books; and who, out of spite and in order to break down what little pride he might have left, set him to the low drudgery of copying the titles of Dutch books!

The mention of this incident brings me to another of Mr. Jones' disqualifications. A man may be comparatively incompetent, and yet succeed well by means of gentlemanly behaviour and general courtesy. Gentlemanly feeling cannot be produced by outside polish. The English gentleman is a gentleman first of all in heart, and I know of no *recipe* for manufacturing him. He must be born and bred a gentleman, and such people are not, so far as my experience goes, produced anywhere except in England and in my own country. Perhaps because England and Poland are the only two countries possessing an aristocracy of true breeding whose members are not brought up to be military despots, or to nourish the pride of ancient traditions which they have not the wealth to sustain. Let us return to Mr. Jones. Specimens of his behaviour have already been given above. His treatment of Mr. Deutsch, and his brutality to Mr. Warren, are sufficient instances of his lack of culture. Lack of culture alone is not an unpardonable defect if combined with civility. However, it shows a low nature. It has been my lot to see Mr. Jones in both aspects. When I first came to him, a friendless reader, to complain of the conduct of Naake, I spoke to him in a tone calm and confident—the tone that one gentleman should adopt toward another when asking for justice. I was kept standing near the door while he sat in his throne and

endeavoured to fix me with an hostile stare and finally dismissed me with the curt remark that, "No notice could be taken of my complaint."

On a later visit, after my letter to the Trustees, when I had perhaps become more formidable, he placed my chair as near his as if we had been lovers on the stage, and avowed his intention five or six times of "listening to me with much respect,"—a phrase which, I have a vague idea, is sometimes used by unskilled and self-conscious servants, but never by one gentleman to another.

My correspondence was, as readers may see, treated like myself to the same alternations of rudeness and fawning courtesy.

The men who are in Mr. Jones's confidence, and whom he seizes every occasion to promote over the heads of their fellows, are even more modest in their contributions to literature. They edit few handbooks, and they make no translations from Blackstone or otherwise. There is hardly one of them who could venture on translation without certain disaster. I have seen, with my own eyes, an autograph letter, written by Mr. Rye when he was still an assistant, in which "compositor" is spelled phonetically: "compositer." There! Mr. Rye did, however, once get bitten by the literary *æstrus*, or rather he was bitten and others felt the sting. He published a book "England as seen by Foreigners;" compiled from foreign memoirs and books of travel. This "original work" was translated and put into good English (the Dutch part of it) by Mr. Martineau, a distinguished scholar, but only an assistant. The Latin portion received the same kind attention from Mr. Knight; while poor Deutsch, for the sake of peace and quiet, undertook to do the German part. Thenceforth behold Mr. Rye the original author! The others mentioned are like unto him.

Their relationship to Mr. Jones, or their connection with him, stands them in better stead than learning and ability. Let us take, for instance, the romantic case of Mr. Fagan, which involves an interesting story, and at the same time gives a curious instance of the way in which promotion goes in the British Museum.

Besides being Librarian of the Museum, Signor Panizzi was occasionally employed by Lord Palmerston on diplomatic secret service of a kind in which Englishmen do not shine, and for which they have little taste. In the course of his many visits to Italy he became the owner—by adoption it is said,—of three children, who were subsequently brought up by the name of Fagan, the proprietor of this name being a clerk who was for a long time at the Naples Legation, but who, by favour of Signor Panizzi, got from Lord Palmerston various appointments in South America, where he died in 1869. The second son—the first with whom we have to deal—came at once to London. It was not his first visit. He had passed through before when Mr. Fagan, the diplomatist, crossed the Atlantic, and at that time Signor Panizzi desired to make him his private secretary! This the Trustees would not allow, so he had gone South. On his return, a partial orphan, he found in Mr. Jones a third father. At once an attempt was made to place him as a junior assistant in the British Museum. The only obstacle was that he failed in the preliminary examination. The Foreign Office was by some means induced to afford him a shelter for a few months, after which time Mr. Jones had matured another scheme. Said Mr. Jones to the Trustees, “There is great need of a man in the Secretary’s Office, who can speak Italian.” The Trustees approved the creation of a new post, and then, of course, Mr. Jones came across Mr.

Fagan, just as according to Falstaff Hotspur came to rebellion—

“Rebellion came in his way and he found it.”

Why, this was the very man for the place ! How strange ! So pleased were they that this time they excused all examination, except in Italian by Signor Lacaita, a Civil Service Examiner who, quite by accident, is an old friend of Signor Panizzi, and is indebted to him for a lucrative post in this country. This severe ordeal past Mr. Fagan was duly installed. But within a very few months of the making of this very necessary appointment, the gentleman, whose knowledge of Italian was to prove so valuable that all other qualifications were dispensed with, was promoted to the Department of Prints and Drawings, where knowledge of Italian is useless.

It is curious to observe that, in order to place Mr. Fagan in this position, Mr. Jones passed him to it over the head of an able young man, Mr. Donoghue, who was formerly *protégé* of Mr. Jones himself, and who was, it is believed, recommended to Mr. Reid by Mr. Jones, some eight years ago, in a very characteristic way, which indeed gave Mr. Reid hardly any choice but to accept him. Poor Mr. Donoghue is now supplanted by Mr. Fagan, who came into the Department as senior assistant after only three months previous service at the Museum ! Established in this position, and fully understanding, both from knowledge and experience, that in the present state of things incompetence was no bar to advancement, Mr. Fagan already sees himself, in imagination, chief of the Department, and, it may be, even successor to the exalted position of his adopted father, in which latter position perchance he might endict a handbook with translation of “*Che sara, sara,*” and all other Italian mottos adopted by the English

nobility. It is lamentable to contemplate the Departments of the British Museum likely to be given up to such persons, when the services of a man like Mr. Reid, who has been thirty-five years in the Museum, are compensated by a salary of £500 a year; and while it would take an Act of Parliament to give promotion to Mr. Granville, the pillar of the Reading-Room, a gentleman, courteous and communicative in three languages, for many years past on a pittance of something under five pounds a week—about the pay of four of the housemaids, or three of the window cleaners. As if, however, Mr. Fagan's present position and future were not sufficient, Mr. Jones has for the last two years been endeavouring to create a new office of assistant-keeper of Prints and Drawings for him. Mr. Reid, knowing what the value of the assistance would be, has resisted change, which he might otherwise have approved, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who seems to have had some inkling of the real state of the case, emphatically stated last year that he will never put his signature to such an appointment. Mr. Jones, however, is like Wordsworth's earthquake—he "is not satisfied at once"; and, to do him justice, he may be actuated by that sense of favours past and to come towards Signor Panizzi, which is called gratitude. So he has renewed his endeavours this year, and although it is hardly likely that, in the face of recent revelations, this scandal will now be perpetrated, still there is a rumour that an increase of salary, to the extent of £100 a year, has been just now granted this rising young man.

We have, however, left out of sight the important post of Italian-speaking gentleman in the Secretary's office, for which Mr. Fagan was at first so urgently needed. Naturally enough, the necessity for this addition to the

staff ceased as soon as Mr. Fagan was promoted to the care of Prints and Drawings, and did not revive until a junior Fagan was ready to take it. Mr. Fagan, junior, has recently obtained the post ; but he is said to be destined for the Department of Prints and Drawings, as soon as his brother has been promoted to some better place. Of course, there would be no very great harm in this, if these young men were men of ability and promise. The Museum officials will say so much, but the elder is in a Department where his only accomplishment (his native tongue) is useless, and where his inability to write English is of little consequence, until he gets higher. The younger meanwhile exhibits no likelihood of surpassing his elder brother in any respect. Now if this offspring (by adoption) of Signor Panizzi is to be thus cared for, getting new places made to order from time to time for his benefit, what reward ought to be given to such men as Mr. George Smith, the great decipherer and interpreter of the buried learning and legends of the ancient Assyrians ? At present this gentleman has, I believe, the munificent sum of £200 a year ! Will the English public approve of this distribution of their wealth ? Besides, what guarantee have you against the irruption of an army of adopted sons ? The paternity of adoption has no natural restraints, and fancy England having to provide for a whole quiver full of Fagans.

Again a contrast : While Mr. Jones does his best to force upon Mr. Reid an assistant keeper in the person of Mr. Fagan, senior, the Geological Department is without an assistant keeper, and sadly in want of one. The whole work is really done by Mr. Woodward, senior assistant. He has begged for the creation of the post of assistant keeper, and has been refused. There is no geological Fagan to be provided for.

Mr. Jones can be as strict on some occasions as he is lax on others. While his favourites are irregularly promoted, less favoured mortals are treated with the utmost rigour of the law. A case: Mr. Berridge, about thirty-eight years of age, was long an attendant in the Reading-Room, and afterwards in the Copyright Office. Quite a linguist, he was of invaluable assistance to foreigners. Greatly overworked, he had, besides, to sit in the Newspaper Room down stairs. When he was proposed for promotion by the late Mr. Watts, the answer of Mr. Jones was, "He is a fortnight too old." This broke the poor man down: he slowly declined in health, and now is in a dying state. A fortnight too old! Can Mr. Jones truly say that he has investigated the birth—let us say, of Messrs. Fagan brothers with such minuteness as this?

We must, however, admit that not in every case is the kind of scheming of which we have spoken successful. An amusing instance was, some time ago, afforded in Mr. Rye's department. Mr. Rye's work has always been largely done by an able assistant, Mr. Graves (godson of Mr. Jones). To recompense Mr. Graves, Messrs. Jones and Rye proposed to the Trustees to create a new assistant keepership for him. The Printed Book Department had then but two assistant keepers, Mr. Bullen and Mr. Porter. But there was a difficulty. Mr. Graves was not the senior in rank. He had still over him two assistants, Mr. Roy and Mr. Ralston. The latter gentleman made a vehement protest and disturbed the arrangement; and, as the matter of the assistant keepership had gone very far, the office was created, and was given to the senior assistant, Mr. Roy (the honest and well-meaning official who conducted me through the Den), and who never expected this piece of good luck. So, then, now we have Mr. Rye,

the useless, with £600 a year and a house; Mr. George Bullen, who has been longer at the Museum than Mr. Rye, and is the best bibliographer living, who receives £450 and no house, and has besides to superintend the Reading Room; and assistant keepers, Messrs. Porter and Roy, with their £450 each and no work in the Reading Room, and no great ability to work anywhere.

There are a couple of other cases worth a word or two. Mr. Taylor is private Secretary to Mr. Jones. He does not represent Mr. Jones's first experiment in Secretaries, but he is more successful than his predecessor, Mr. Thomas Butler, the assistant Secretary. Poor Mr. Butler, with whom Mr. Jones could not agree, has now to be kept below in the basement, and is entirely eclipsed by Mr. Taylor. This freak cost the country Mr. Taylor's £480 a year; but then, at last, Mr. Jones has a man after his own heart, and that must be consoling to the nation. There you have a man hated by all the officials, hard, strong, always trying to "find out," all for repression, and, if courteous, and if possessed of the necessary knowledge, he would make an excellent anti-kicking magistrate for Liverpool.

No little is to be said about the Secretary's office. The Commissioners of 1850 reported very strongly against the very large staff in this office; and, in consequence of this report the staff was reduced, at the instigation of Signor Panizzi. As soon, however, as Signor Panizzi was appointed Chief Librarian, the staff, thus reduced, was restored to its former dimensions, and was even considerably enlarged. A gradual increase has been going on ever since. As to the work of the office it appears to consist mainly in the multiplication of useless labour. The staff are occupied chiefly in exchanging reports upon

reports, and letters upon letters, with keepers who are to be found in the next room. This is found a pleasant way of filling up time after the great work of the office, which is a constant and minute examination of the diaries, which, by the way, have, every one of them, been previously and sufficiently examined by the heads of the respective departments. Pray, is this the sort of management that Englishmen want, and are content to pay for ?

One more instance and I have done with illustrations. There was, in the Library, an assistant, by name, Major, an intimate friend of Mr. Jones, if, at least, such address as "my dear Dick" implies intimacy. But in the Library Mr. Major could not receive more than £500 a year, which is an intolerable fate for a friend of Mr. Jones. Was, then, a place created for him ? No, not a place but a Department ! Notwithstanding the strong opposition of the late Mr. Watts, Mr. Jones represented to the Trustees that it would be a good thing to separate the Maps from the Printed Book Department. Thus was made a keepership £500 a year for "my dear Dick" with a staff of two assistants and three attendants. I will not say a word against Mr. Major, personally, but I will assert that the separate department was not called for by any public interest, and that its separation from the Printed Book Department, already provided with a large staff, was not necessary, and would not have been thought of but for the necessity of making a post for Mr. Major, and I will defy Mr. Jones to prove the contrary.

To do him justice Signor Panizzi never contemplated the establishment of a system of promotion by favour. He created the office of transcriber, at the time he was keeper of the Printed Book Department, with the idea that the transcribers would in the performance of their duties be an

admirable training for the work of assistants. As the transcribers showed themselves efficient he proposed to pick out from among them the *élite* to fill the senior assistants' places as they became vacant. The plan was very promising for the Museum, and for the young men themselves nothing could be more satisfactory. The prospect of promotion stimulates industry, and tempts a man to develop all the ability he possesses — and this ability and industry would have been at the service of the country. But, as we have already seen, talent in the British Museum exposes a man to jealousy from those who possess not talent but office; and zeal for the public service only invites a snubbing. It is not therefore wonderful that Signor Panizzi's idea has never been worked out by Mr. Jones. The promotion of transcribers has been a mere farce. None of them ever had a chance of it, unless they could bring outdoor influence to bear. Mr. Jones and his clique retain in their own hands all the patronage to the best posts of assistants, and the system of direct nominations is yearly on the increase. I take it that this is sufficiently shewn by the fact that out of fourteen vacancies for the post of senior assistant, during the last four years (for only two of which has any special knowledge been required, namely, Natural History and Hebrew) three alone have been filled by the promotion of junior assistants on the respective department\*). As an illustration of the manner how appointments of this kind are made, we may take a recent case. A short short time ago a vacancy occurred in the post of first-class assistant in the Printed Book Department. The appointment is in the

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\* In the moment of going to press I hear of the promotion of Mr. Gregory Eccles, thoroughly deserved, but looking much like an acknowledgment of the rising storm.

hands of the principal Trustees, of whom the Archbishop of Canterbury is the chief; and as soon as it was known that the place would be vacant Mr. Jones seized the opportunity to wait upon his Grace, and represent to him that a man of great intelligence and scholarly attainments was required. Such a man, indeed the very man for the place, was to be found in the list of applicants. True, he was low down in the list, but then on the other hand the well-being of the Institution was at stake. Mr. Miller might not be able to wait till the next vacancy. So Mr. Miller was appointed. He is a man of about average knowledge and ability, but has no qualifications to justify promoting him over the heads of six other men. Yet this was what was done, and the only explanation seems to be that Mr. Miller is a friend of Mr. Jones—the sure road to promotion.

But, it will be again asked, why are not the Trustees better informed, and why do they not suspect all these abuses? I have briefly intimated before that, as in the case of the “den” inspection, and in the periodical visits, they are systematically deceived by Mr. Jones. Let me add to this two points. First, there are four or more active Trustees who have a very high opinion of Mr. Jones, seeing him only as he paints himself; they rule the place through him and his Secretary, Mr. Taylor, the latter being the Achitophel whose counsel directs the policy of Mr. Jones. Secondly, at the monthly meeting of Trustees, held every second Saturday in each month, no one but Mr. Jones can see them or speak to them on any subject. The Commissioners of 1850 did, indeed, recommend that a committee of officers should be appointed to confer with them, but the suggestion fell through. No one but Mr. Jones knows what happens. Even the Museum officials

know only what he chooses to allow. In this case it must be admitted that his game is an easy one to play, the Trustees, under his manipulations, have become mere Merovingian *rois fainéants*, while he has acquired all the influence and authority of the Mayors of the Palace, without having the administrative ability of a Pepin or a Charles Martel.

In concluding this part of my subject I cannot but think that those who will take the trouble to go fairly through the facts adduced, will see that they can be reconciled with no other interpretation than that the Library Department and the departments allied, are in the hands of a clique of inferior and unqualified men, whose treatment of their subordinates is most discreditable, and who manage such promotion as they can grasp with utter disregard of the public interest, and with a single eye to the advancement of favourites and relatives.

## II. MISMANAGEMENT.

THE next thing that I have to show is that the Library Department of the Museum is in truth so badly managed that its value to the public is indescribably diminished. That the public for whose benefit the institution exists, and at whose expense it is maintained, have to complain of vexatious and unnecessary restrictions on their use of it, and that those who overcome these difficulties do not always find themselves treated with the courtesy they have a right to expect from their servants. I am sorry to be obliged to add that in some of these respects the Library does not stand alone among the departments. In this branch of my subject I propose to cite the testimony of others rather than to speak in my own person, and the character of the witnesses I shall call will be such as to leave

no doubt of their right to speak with authority. In the first place, I put in evidence an extract from an article which appeared in the *Athenæum*, with the suggestive title,

“PUNISHING THE PUBLIC.”

+ “The present Librarian contrasts disadvantageously with his official precursor. It is needless to inquire whether his failure in one respect arises from want of scholarly sympathy with scholars, and whether his ill success in the other respect is due to a lack of the sagacity which is not always conspicuous in the “official mind.” It is enough for us to remark with regret that, whilst his administrative changes are not conducive to the safety of the property under his charge, some of them are exceedingly vexatious to ladies and gentlemen who are incapable of stealing or wantonly injuring books. The Principal Librarian seems to imagine that he is vigilant and active against the half-dozen contemptible malefactors who thief cheap books of reference and tear pages from Post Office Directories, when he is ostentatiously suspicious of the hundreds of honest persons who visit the Museum Library for proper purposes.

It is strange that a supreme official, with detectives and a strong regiment of vigilant servants under his command, should avow himself powerless to discover and punish half-a-dozen paltry knaves, unless he may treat the entire body of Museum readers as possibly felonious. It may occasion him surprise to learn how annoying some of his arrangements are to ladies and gentlemen who are naturally resentful of treatment which assumes them to be objects of official suspicion; but we can assure him that we neither exaggerate, nor have any disposition to magnify the offensiveness of his more irritating regulations. It is not right that a scholar, who wishes to consult a collection

of old ballads or broadsides that are somewhat rare or curious, should be marched from his seat in the Reading-Room into an interior chamber, and be there required to make his researches under the gaze of eyes appointed to see that he does not steal the pages which he only desires to peruse. The Librarian must be strangely ignorant of the sensitiveness of students, or he would not require us to tell him that such treatment is not conducive to the equanimity requisite for study. What, again, can be more ridiculous than the official order, obeyed by the attendant, who, on giving some richly-bound or otherwise curious volume to a reader incapable of injuring any book, observes, "This, sir, is a case book, and you are requested to be very careful with it"? Nor can anything but annoyance to readers result from the rule which forbids a receiver of books at the central bar to take a known reader's books, and restore him his tickets, until the pressmarks of the tickets have been compared with the press-marks on the restored volumes. At the close of the day, when readers are giving back their volumes in quick succession, this order is somewhat fruitful of prodigious worry and trouble and we cannot imagine any good that can follow from its observance which might not be compassed by other, and quite unobjectionable means. Hitherto, we, like the public, have been long suffering and submissive, out of proper reluctance to increase the embarrassments of a gentleman who has undoubtedly a desire to do his duty. But the Chief Librarian has exhausted our patience by his last extravagances. Now that an Archbishop has been refused admittance to the Reading-Room, as though he were an impertinent intruder, till provided with a special order, and the chief of a great public department, personally known to almost every officer of the Library, has endured the

discourtesy, we may fairly beg the Librarian to remember that, whilst it is his duty to take all reasonable care of our great Library, it is also his duty to render its treasures accessible to students. We may even go so far as to suggest that, instead of raising obstacles in the way of students who may wish to enter the Reading-Room habitually, he should preserve to them the facilities for study accorded to them by Sir Antonio Panizzi, and even endeavour to enlarge those facilities.

The latest measures for the worse government of the Reading-Room have been, to require all readers to provide themselves with new tickets of admission ; to exclude from the Reading-Room all persons (however well known to the librarians) who have neglected to get new cards of entrance; to order that all such newly-granted tickets be renewed every six months ; and to command the porters to refuse admission to the Reading-Room to every student who, though duly provided with a new ticket, cannot exhibit it on each occasion of seeking entrance.

The Librarian's defence of his order for this incessant showing of tickets is scarcely less absurd than the order itself. He has a theory that thieves find their way into the Reading-room under cover of tickets to which they are not entitled. Granted in the first instance to fit persons, these cards have been lost, and, falling into the hands of wrongful owners, have enabled the book-thieves and book-tearers to pass themselves off as students, and enter the room of study. If readers would take proper care of their tickets, thieves and other despoilers would not get possession of them, and the Chief Librarian would be relieved of the painful task of vainly hunting delinquents whom he is not smart enough to catch. By compelling readers to show their tickets once or five times a day, the

Chief Librarian will train them to take care of their cards. Here we have his theory, statement of an evil, and remedy. We question whether he could produce ten facts in support of the theory. Your library-sneak is almost always on the square matters of mere form, just as your fugitive criminal is usually provided with a sufficient passport, wherever passports are requisite for the comfort of travellers. Whenever the Librarian shall be so fortunate as to catch a Reading-room thief, he will find the delinquent duly armed with a pink ticket, specially granted to him. But, whatever the facts on which the Librarian has based his theory, it is obvious that they point to the dangerousness of tickets, and the advisability of abolishing the whole system of cards of admission. If lost tickets are so productive of mischief, it is impolitic to multiply the tickets which are liable to be lost. The Librarian may have his way in training and punishing readers, but he will fail to teach them to be sufficiently careful. Cards will be lost; and the Librarian would not venture to refuse to give new tickets to their losers. Parliament will be slow to make the losing of a reading-ticket an offence punishable with imprisonment, or fine, or loss of a student's rights in the public library. Consequently, in proportion as more tickets are granted, more will be lost, and, according to the Librarian's theory, more thieves will be qualified to sneak into the Library and steal or damage books of reference. The remedy will, in the long run, aggravate the mischief it is intended to cure. It is idle to dream of curing *by* tickets the trouble caused *by* tickets. Instead of extending the ticket-of-leave system, and thereby furnishing the very machinery by which he declares the delinquents gain access to the Library, let the Chief Librarian

abolish it altogether, and have recourse to the signature system, which would strengthen his official hands, and proportionately embarrass the "destructives" and the stealers. Let him put up a long desk in the passage to the Reading-Room, and require every reader on entering the room to sign his name in a visitors' book. The lawless person who would not hesitate to use a ticket, which he had *found*, would be shy of writing a name, real or spurious, on such record. The guardian of such a visitors' book would, of course, have at hand a list of all persons entitled to read in the Library, and also specimen signatures of all qualified readers; and he would be prompt to use this simple machinery for the discomfiture of any intruder who should venture, at the risk of almost immediate exposure, to sign the ledger. The trouble of signing would, in reality, be nothing to readers who must sign a ticket for every book ordered from the Library; and even if it were slightly troublesome, they would, of course, gladly take the trouble, for the security and welfare of their place of study. By acting on this suggestion, the Librarian would provide himself with an efficient barrier for the exclusion of persons not authorized to enter the Reading-Room; and, in so far as they are the deeds of such intruders, the thefts and injuries of which so much has been recently heard, would cease to be perpetrated. For the rest, in his fight with the stealers and other misdemeanants, we should advise the Librarian to rely more on the vigilance of his subordinates than on restrictive measures which are vexatious to the readers whom he should seek to please, and only amusing to the offenders whom we should gladly see him punish."

It will be seen that the evidence goes to prove; First, the incompetence of the Chief Librarian in the performance of

an important duty, that of protecting the Library from the depredations of dishonest persons ; Second, his want of courtesy and consideration for the public, as evidenced by his vexatious and irritating rules ; and Third, the unwise restrictions by which the public is prevented from making full use of the Library. The writer is a man whose words will have weight, for the *Athenæum* justly takes a high place in the literary world of all countries. It is clear, too, that he is a scholar and a gentleman ; that he desires to be as moderate and conciliatory as the subject will allow ; and that he is thoroughly acquainted with the subject of which he writes. If this testimony stood alone it would be sufficient to inspire grave doubts as to the fitness of Mr. Jones for the post he occupies. But as my readers see, it is very far from being a solitary proof.

I now propose to put in an extract, a letter which Mr. Walter Thornbury recently addressed to the *Times* respecting the atmosphere of the Reading Room, which, though not so horrible as that of the Den, is, especially towards the close of the day, very disagreeable and unwholesome. Mr. Walter Thornbury says :

“ I have heard complaints from fellow-students of frequent headaches, faintness, and langour towards the end of the day, as the air, originally bad and never renewed, grows thicker and more deleterious. I myself have frequently, during the last five years, felt the same symptoms as my friends, but, being of a robust constitution and much addicted to exercise, I have never thought much about it. A severe illness, however, in the summer of this year, and the recent lamentable deaths of two specially-gifted men in the Printed Book Department—the chief rooms of which are sunk many feet below the level of the Reading-room—have opened my eyes to the disagreeable fact that I and hundreds of far better men than myself have been for half their lives labouring to amuse or benefit their fellow-creatures in an atmosphere, to say the least of it, uncondusive to longevity. The Reading-room of the British Museum is, in fact, no better than a huge fern-case.”

Mr. Thornbury also mentions the insulting exclusion of the Archbishop of Dublin, alluded to by the *Athenæum*, and he

pleads against the vexatious rule as to showing tickets, by which a student well-known for twenty years to every Museum official may lose a day's work by simply forgetting to put his ticket into the pocket of a new waistcoat. I have quoted Mr. Thornbury as a well-known writer who comes forward to testify to the fact that the health and comfort of the public in the Reading-room has been totally uncared for for years past, and that even the primitive and unscientific remedy of an open window has never occurred to Mr. Jones's mind. The fact is that Mr. Jones is deaf to all suggestions for improvement. This suffocation grievance is no new one, but by way of comment on the peculiar action of Mr. Jones whenever a grievance is pointed out, I may quote a satirical note from the *Evening Standard* of the 11th of January last. The editor says:—

“The public are, no doubt, by this time thoroughly informed of the great ventilation grievance in the British Museum, which has already cost the lives of two of the most valued of the staff, and is the cause of daily suffering to scores of authors, readers, and librarians. We are very happy to announce that the most prompt and energetic steps have already been taken to remedy this evil, and a little consideration will show how simple the remedy is when one comes to think about it. The new system of ventilation is the establishment within the last few days of turnstiles at the doors of the great hall. This is, we know, at first sight calculated to horrify those persons who have taken pleasure in admiring the easy access hitherto granted to this noble institution. The criticism of such persons must be silenced for ever when they are informed that the true object of those turnstiles is ventilation. A watch is to be kept at each door, and while fresh air only is to be admitted at one, the foul air is to be ignominiously turned out at the other, by the aid of the police if necessary. This is the chief reason why those turnstiles have been put up in response to a demand for ventilation. And, which is more important, the turnstiles, even though they should disappoint expectations in one respect, will certainly enable the authorities to collect more easily those statistics of visitors which are the life and soul of the institution.”

That is just Mr. Jones's way. Asked to remedy a grievance he replies by perfecting his statistical machinery. The rehearsal of these turnstiles however did not prove a suc-

cess in any way. They were speedily taken away. What the useless experiment cost the public I have no means of ascertaining.

Let us now put another witness into the box. *The Building News* of the 29th January last contains a long and carefully written article on the present condition of the Museum; referring entirely to the pressing want of accommodation for the treasures stored there; the most valuable records of antiquity are huddled together in unexplored vaults, shut up under lock and key, or packed away in wooden penthouses. Incidentally the writer touches on the Library, and he thus concludes his remarks:

The "gigantic warehouse of unpacked goods" could not, however be appreciably relieved by their removal, although, in all likelihood, it would gain in security by the transfer of the binders' industry to other premises. Every one is aware of the materials essential to this industry, but few imagine the terrible storage of them in the vaults below the British Museum. Again, few will deny that, in many respects, the Institution has been degraded into a monstrous receptacle of curiosities, often given by those who wanted to be rid of them, and accepted hap-hazard as attractions for Boxing-Day and Easter Monday. As the collection was made upon no principle, so its depository was constructed upon no plan; but, having dwelt upon the antiquities, let us linger for a few moments among the books, which are multiplying at a rate never before dreamed of. Is it necessary to shelve and catalogue every miscellany and trifle sent in due form to the Librarian? Would it be more profane to keep a three-volume romance out of sight—when out of date—than to put a cloak of dust upon a Xanthian marble worth, perhaps, fifty times the literature of a modern season? Nothing is heard of except a continual process of filling, and little wonder that the "readers" get for answer so often, "not to be found." Where is the lost volume? Sunk, perhaps, in the same vault which hides some lovely Phygalian torso, or some far-situated cell which not one in ten of the officials has ever heard of. And another remark has to be made. While these treasures are thus condemned to darkness, they are decomposing. Further, grand though the Reading-room and the King's Library may superficially seem, they do not answer their true purpose so well as the Library—Royal, Imperial, and National, as it has been called by turns—of, for example, Paris, where the structural arrangements are incomparably superior, both as regards convenience, and as regards the preservation of the volumes themselves. Taken altogether, the question, old though it be, has acquired fresh aspects recently, and must continue to acquire them while the incessant influx continues of

antiquities that are hustled into cellars, sheds, or ignoble corners ; and the stream of literature pours in, from every quarter of both worlds, until the managers are in despair, and the architects completely puzzled. It seems a problem which only Parliament can solve ; for there are two Parliamentary points at issue :—one, of a vote for sanctioning a wholesale removal from Bloomsbury elsewhere ; and one of another vote, upon a far more magnificent scale, authorising the completion of the British Museum as a National institution, to meet the wants of the present, and to a reasonable degree, of the future. The actual underground, huddled, and destructive state of affairs cannot be permanently tolerated, and it would be indeed a shame were we to deal with our national collections by disbanding them.”

This being the state of affairs no one can be surprised that the Museum is not increasing in popularity. In 1873 the *Athenæum* noticed this in a warning article, in which it says :

“The numbers of ‘persons admitted to visit,’ such is the style of the place, the British Museum have considerably declined during a period much longer than that included in the Report before us, which goes no further back than 1867, between which year and the last the decrease was more than 21,000 ; while, excluding last year, the diminution was not less than 27,000—a rate of reduction which seems to have been checked, but only checked by the opening of the Museum on Monday and Saturday evenings, between May 8 and August 12 from six till eight o’clock—an extension of time which has been conceded in consideration of the too-evident decline of popular interest in this magnificent establishment. This concession was in a right direction ; but it has not been made sufficiently known to the public to produce the fullest results. The fact is, there appears to lie at the bottom of this matter a sort of feeling, not less happily because unconsciously expressed by the phrase quoted above, ‘persons admitted to visit,’ the British Museum, a remnant of the chary, not to say jealous, spirit which limited the number to fewer than thirty or thereabouts ‘persons admitted to visit,’ &c., and which still obtains so far that the collections are closed on two days and a half of each week—a restriction which we have no hesitation in saying is as unnecessary as it is vexatious, and for which no excuse can be urged, excepting the the supposed interests of the youths who draw in the sculpture galleries, and who, for want of a little good counsel, waste three parts of their time in copying bad models.”

There is no doubt that this writer’s remarks are correct in attributing the falling off to the churlishness of some officials, and to the very unsatisfactory state of the Museum itself. On this point I will avail myself of the unimpeach-

able testimony of a Parliamentary return published last year. From this it appears that notwithstanding the opening of the Ornament Room in 1868, and the extension of hours for visitors during the summer months since 1872, the total of visitors is not greater than it was in 1868, and less than it was in 1869. The visits to the Library for the purposes of study or research are not more numerous than they were seven years ago, and show a falling off since 1871. Now let us consider how much the population of London has increased during that period, and how much more accessible the Museum has been made from town and country by improved systems of locomotion, and we shall be in a position to judge of the decline of the popularity of the place.

On the subject of the Library mismanagement I have one more most important witness to call. Without a really good catalogue a gigantic library is only a device for hiding books out of sight for ever. Students may come and yearn to explore a subject through its whole domain, but without an official catalogue even the best informed of them will be groping in the dark. Now let me place the catalogue in the witness-box and ask a few questions.

#### EXAMINATION OF THE CATALOGUE.

Q. You are the catalogue of the British Museum Library?

A. I am to be when complete.

Q. When will that be?

A. I have not the remotest notion, nor has any one else. The preface to my printed Volume I. says of me, "It remains unfinished, and totally devoid of anything like an index." This is quite true of my present condition.

Q. How long have you been in growing?

A. More years than I care to remember. Twenty years

ago or more *Punch* used to make jokes as to the number of years it would take to finish the letter A.

Q. Is that letter yet complete?

A. It is. The printing of it cost £770.

Q. How many men are employed upon you?

A. About twenty-five men devote their whole time to me from year to year.

Q. Is any attempt made to divide the work among these in a regular way, with a view to systematic arrangement?

A. No. There are men specially employed in Chinese, Hebrew, and Oriental languages, but no other specialists.

Q. Is there any general inspection of the work done?

A. No.

Q. Whose business would that be?

A. Mr. Rye's; but he is always so busily engaged with the intricacies of English orthography and the "Mother Country as seen by Foreigners" that he can seldom spare the time to show himself out of his room.

Q. From the time and labour spent on you [I suppose that you must have cost a good deal of money?

A. Yes, up to this year I have cost £200,000. The cost alone of pasting new slips in is £2,500 a year!

Q. Two hundred thousand pounds, and not half finished! You must think yourself a very valuable work?

A. I am afraid not. I am at present only an unfinished list of authors named, and that is of comparatively little use.

Q. Explain your meaning more fully.

A. If you want a book and know the name of your author I am of some service, because you can refer to his name and find the title of his book, but if you don't know the name of the author there is no means of finding it out. There is no cross index of any kind; and there is

no classification of books. Suppose, for instance, you are a student and want to get up such books as have been written on English history, or the geology of Great Britain, or civil engineering, it is not in my power to offer you any assistance. You must know something about the books before I can help you to find them. This renders me almost useless to learners.

Q. Have you then any reason to believe that the present system of cataloguing is a vicious one, and might easily be improved?

A. Assuredly; and I can give illustrations of my meaning. Had good chiefs existed, and had not the department been crushed under its cumbersome system of cataloguing, every book would have been catalogued years ago, and an index to the catalogue would have enabled readers to find what they want at once. How cumbersome the present system is, and how hard for even *employés* who have nothing else to do but to learn it, is proved by the fact that not uncommonly two copies of the same book are catalogued under two completely different headings; nay, three copies have been known to be catalogued under three different headings. Thus three *employés* took three different views of the law, and yet they study nothing else in the British Museum but this law. Again, books entered under initials are for the most part completely lost. Very few people know that the initials A. B. occurred at the end of the preface of some familiar book. Very few books of reference mention these initials. There are hundreds of books entered under initials. Almost all of these are buried out of sight. Books under the pseudonyms also are generally lost to sight. Thus, if a writer signs his preface "Rusticus," the book is entered under that head; if "Rusticus Expectans" no notice is taken of the pseudonym. If the book is said to be

“by a man,” it goes under “man,” if “by a young man,” the pseudonym is ignored. Of what possible use can a catalogue so compiled be to any student. Instead of bringing the Library within easy reach of all it is framed on a design of burying for ever a very considerable proportion of the most curious and valuable book.

Q. Have you any reason to suppose that the cost might be diminished?

A. Yes. In the evidence before the Royal Commission of 1850 the Rev. S. Maitland said that a catalogue containing 800,000 titles might be drawn up in three or four years, and printed in one; and another witness estimated that the whole catalogue might be printed for £4,000.

THE BRITISH LION. Before you leave the box, I wish to remind you that you are on oath. Are the jury then to understand that you have monopolised the labour of some twenty-five men for near a generation; that you have cost already £200,000; that you are almost useless to the public; that the system on which you are being compiled is a thoroughly bad one; that, owing to the incompetence of officials, both time and money are wasted upon you; and that there is no definite prospect of your being ever finished?

A. I swear it.

THE BRITISH LION. That will do. You may stand down.

After that evidence I might well close my case under this head; but I have a few words more to add. It may be contended: “After all, the British Museum has still the best Library out of each country of each country’s books.” This was the boast of the late Mr. Watts. Of course the Library of English books is kept complete, copies are sent in by force of law—the exertions of officers in this branch

being confined to the introduction of works which are not published according to law. But I venture to assert that the Polish, Hungarian, Russian, and Scandinavian books have been greatly neglected since the death of Mr. Watts. The French and German books are supplied by booksellers, whose interest it is to send in as many as possible. The authorities of the British Museum buy only what is offered them, and do not seek to make the Library complete, or to supply any deficiencies. The consequence is that, except in one or two directions, the Foreign Library is ill supplied. There are men in the Museum in a position to note these deficiencies, and to make suggestions as to filling them—such for instance as the special catalogues of Chinese, Oriental, and Hebrew books, before mentioned. But these men are not allowed to *order* books, they have nothing to do but to catalogue what is in the library. During Mr. Deutsch's life-time, at all events, no assistant was allowed to take any share in the management of the department. The assistants were mere cataloguing-machines, and if they ever attempted in their zeal to do more than catalogue, they were immediately snubbed. Meanwhile the officials who snubbed them are utterly unable to supply themselves the work thus patriotically volunteered.

*Ohé ! jam satis est !* I pass to the brief consideration of my last point.

### III. THE WASTE OF PUBLIC MONEY.

THE last point I have undertaken to demonstrate is, that the mismanagement I have described is not unaccompanied by a scandalous waste of public money. Direct proof is difficult, because one has little more than the meagre accounts furnished to Parliament. Incidentally,

however, some portion of this chapter has of necessity been anticipated, and to this I may briefly refer before going further. I have shewn in the first place that there has been a reckless multiplication of offices in order to create posts for the favourites and relatives of Mr. Jones. This unnecessary expenditure has been further aggravated by the bestowal of these posts on wholly incompetent men. In the second place I have shewn how the Secretarial Staff has been increased in defiance of the recommendations of a Royal Commission. Thirdly, I shewed pretty clearly what the country had to pay because Mr. Jones could not do his work himself, or agree with the Secretaries who came to do it for him; and, lastly, in the crowning abuse of the Catalogue I showed a gross and almost incredible waste of hundreds of thousands of pounds on work that is, for the present at least, worthless. This is a tolerably fair beginning to be gathered from merely incidental remarks.

Up to March 1873 (the latest return issued April, 1874), the [total expense of maintaining the British Museum for one hundred and twenty years had been £3,452,863. Of this sum more than £770,000 stands to the account of the last ten years. That is to say, it cost nearly one third as much to keep up the Museum for the last ten years as for the previous hundred and ten years. Besides the long period is charged with £44,000 for land, lease, and new buildings, an item extinguished during the last ten years. "Buildings, Repairs, and Fittings," keep the very high average of about £10,000 a year, of which all that can be said here is that there seems very little to be seen for so large a sum.

In the accounts presented to Parliament there is one for "Building," and I may give an example of how insufficient a mere return to Parliament may prove as an index to a job.

A few years ago the Elgin marble room was extended—certainly a very necessary improvement. The extension, however, amounted only to an addition of forty-four feet; there were no houses to be pulled down, and no compensations to be given away. What did the confiding public pay for these forty-four feet of a room? Why, between £12,000 and £16,000! Enough to have built a museum, and actually one third of the sum paid for the original museum, including the cost of the site!

“House expenses” have increased at the rate of about £50 a year; but the item of “Salaries, Wages, Police, and Retired Allowances” for the last ten years, stand at £486,000, as against £879,000 for the previous hundred and ten years! Making every allowance for development, is not this a little startling? Nobody grudges well-spent money; and there are plenty of people in the Museum who are getting too little, but are there not a good many getting vastly too much?

Besides the “maintenance,” about £40,000 a year goes in purchases. This money need not be grudged, if judiciously spent, but that can hardly be when the things purchased are hidden away to rot where no one can see them.

Hitherto in this chapter I have but quoted figures which, viewed in the light of the previous pages, seem to suggest the necessity for searching inquiry. I now come to one or two particular items, which seem to teach the same lesson, only more emphatically. Here, for instance, is the little item of bookbinding. So far as I can gather it comes to £4,500 a year, and represents the binding of 8,745 volumes and 539 pamphlets. This makes the average cost 9s. 6d. a volume or pamphlet, for binding alone—a rather portentous sum. Take another. The British Museum

is no doubt a big place, and must cost a good deal to keep clean, but is the public prepared to learn that twenty-four window cleaners are employed at £1,500 a year and all their materials found them, while a "foreman of window cleaners" has close upon £100 a year to see them do their duty? After this we can hardly grudge the £150 for brooms, brushes and pails; the £200 for washing the dusters and towels; and the £149 for beating carpets—how many, and how often?—or the four housemaids at 21s. to 25s. a week. *De minimis non curat lex.*

There is one item which has puzzled me more than any other I have seen. Mr. Jones has an office at the Museum, and the credit of this country is pledged to see it comfortably furnished. But Mr. Jones's office seems to take a long time furnishing, or else he changes its furniture rather capriciously. Look at this table.

#### FITTINGS AND FURNITURE FOR PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN'S OFFICE.

	£
1868-69 .....	0
1869-70 .....	135
1870-71 .....	107
1871-72 .....	123
1872-73 .....	239
1873-74 .....	154
1874-75 .....	141
Total .....	899

All this for furnishing one office! Mark how gradual the process. £900 expended and yet nothing superfluous. What a wilderness the place must have been five years ago, when but £135 was laid out! What stoical endurance must have been needed to put up with a paltry £107 in 1870-71; and how outraged human nature at last asserted its rights in the £239 just as Deutsch was dying for want of common necessities.



The other evening, at the Newsvendor's dinner, I heard Sir John Bennett explain to an amused company that his best and most original after-dinner ideas were in reality the property of the amiable lady who inspired them at the breakfast table. Remembering this yesterday, and making practical application of the incident, I went to call on a lady whose cultivated taste, and intuitive feminine perception tempted me to show her the proofs of the preceding pages. Being among Nature's chosen ones she had, besides, the imprint on her of a husband able and good ;— and it is with women as with the British Museum, God knows what the best of them may become in bad hands ! As she read the pamphlet I sat sipping tea and meditating on the bounty of Providence in bestowing on the women of this land their beautiful blonde hair as a compensation for the sunlessness of the country.

When she had finished, after a moment of silence she raised her eyes to me and said :—

“ Shall I tell you frankly, Mr. Poles, what will happen ? ”

“ Well, I suppose an inquiry will be instituted ; Mr. Jones will be —— ”

“ Oh, not at all. If your pamphlet sells so that it cannot be ignored, the officials will draw up an address of loyal devotion to Mr. Jones ; the transcribers will be compelled to sign it, and the Trustees will say : ‘ We shall uphold you, Mr. Jones, and we beg you not to be disturbed by the attacks of that spiteful foreigner. ’ ”



## APPENDIX.

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### A

October 27, 1874.

SIR,—I have lately, as you know, applied to the Trustees of the British Museum with regard to a pamphlet published in the house of Messrs. Gilbert and Rivington, but not bearing any publishers' name, which has been introduced irregularly into the library of the Museum. Those of the Trustees who have responded to me have referred the matter to you as chief librarian, and to you I, therefore now appeal. I am anxious that you should understand that my application to you was, and is, entirely independent of any proceedings now pending in the Central Criminal Court. I have not included M. Naake among those who have conspired for the publication of this pamphlet. I merely state that, without regard to its contents, he foisted it into the library in a manner which was not only irregular, but quite contrary to the spirit of the rules which govern your institution. What I ask is, not that the contents of the pamphlet should be investigated—the matter is wholly independent of them—but that the manner in which the pamphlet was originally brought into the library should be made the subject of an immediate inquiry, together with the behaviour of M. Naake in connexion with the matter when the attention of his superiors was drawn to it, and when it was mentioned before Mr. Newton at the police court. I have no wish to bring any official of the British Museum into my case or to couple any of them with the individuals whom I am compelled to prosecute; and I therefore trust that an independent inquiry on your part may at once do me justice and vindicate the character of the magnificent establishment in which your name represents so much of authority.

I am Sir, yours, &c.,

J. Winter Jones, Esq.

STEFAN POLES.

British Museum, Oct. 27, 1874.

SIR, I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day's date, which shall receive due consideration.

I remain, your very obedient servant,

Stefan Poles, Esq.

J. WINTER JONES.

November 4, 1874.

SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 27th October, promising due consideration of my request for an inquiry into the conduct of one of your officials named M. Naake. While thanking you for this courtesy, I am constrained to press for an immediate inquiry, as the matter is one of the utmost consequence to me. Could you see a translation of the infamous pamphlet which this man exerted himself to introduce surreptitiously into the National Library, you would I am sure fully sympathise with my indignation.

I feel it impossible to rest for a moment until not only that anonymous pamphlet is cast out from the British Museum, but also prompt measures are taken to punish the man who has so disgracefully abused his position in order to gratify private malevolence. Should you be unable to act more promptly in this matter without the direct interference of the Trustees, I am encouraged to think that a repetition of my appeal to them, backed by numerous English friends, will not be without the desired effect.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

J. Winter Jones, Esq.

STEFAN POLES.

British Museum, Nov. 7, 1874

SIR,—In reply to your letter dated the 4th of November, I beg leave to say that, understanding the pamphlet to which you allude to be libellous, I have taken steps to prevent its being seen by any person whatever. I have not read it myself nor am I at all anxious to do so.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Stefan Poles, Esq.

J. WINTER JONES.

December 17, 1874.

SIR,—You may have seen from the papers that the action which I was compelled to take against the printers and distributors of a pamphlet introduced into the British Museum by one of your subordinates named Naake has terminated in the conviction of the defendants, one of whom, who claimed to be a friend of M. Naake, absconded, while the other two pleaded guilty. It was perhaps too much to expect that you should take action before the case was decided: but you kindly promised me to deal with the circumstances as soon as the Central Criminal Court should have pronounced its opinion. Had not the defence so suddenly collapsed I should have placed Naake in the witness-box, and

I venture to think that in that event I should have needed no more than to ask you to consider the evidence that he might have been compelled to give. I have no wish that he should be condemned without due inquiry, and therefore, as the trial ended so abruptly, I shall most readily give you whatever supplementary information you may wish for in the course of the promised inquiry. Being quite unable to rest until this matter is finally disposed of, and therefore hoping soon to hear from you to that effect.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully.

J. Winter Jones, Esq.

STEFAN POLES.

British Museum, Dec. 19, 1874.

SIR,—I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th inst.

I understood from your letter that no evidence was given at the late trial respecting M. Naake. So far as that gentleman is concerned, therefore, matters remain precisely as they were before the trial, and there is no case for an inquiry.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Stefan Poles, Esq.

J. WINTER JONES.

20, Great Marlborough-street, Dec. 21, 1874.

SIR,—Your note surprises me. You have admitted that a certain pamphlet not bearing the name of a publisher (and therefore illegal) has found a place in the British Museum. This was impossible in the regular course of things.

You have admitted that you understand the contents of this pamphlet to be libellous, and the Central Criminal Court has confirmed the view.

You admit that, in consequence of the above understanding, you have taken precautions to prevent the pamphlet from being seen; and yet, after all these admissions of irregularity you tell me that there is no case for inquiry, and that, forsooth, not because my action failed, but because my opponents pleaded guilty and no evidence could be called.

I can only think that in your complicated duties you must have forgotten the former part of our correspondence. Trusting that this is the explanation of your late letter and loth to appeal again to the Trustees,

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. Winter Jones, Esq.

STEFAN POLES.

No reply has been received to this letter.

## B

20, Great Marlborough Street, W. Feb. 1 1875.

SIR,—As I am just finishing a work on the present condition and management of the British Museum, I have naturally desired to consult the official Report of the Royal Commission of 1850, but for more than a week, I have been informed on each application I made, that it was in the hands of others. I must confess to some surprise at finding so obscure a book so popular just now, but as it was important to have it, I took care this morning to be the first man in the Reading-Room, even then it was not on its shelf, and I discovered to my surprise, that it had been very recently struck out from the catalogue of the Books of Reference. After an hour of patient waiting, when the hope of finding it seemed lost, it was suddenly brought me from Mr. Rye's private office.

It is not for me to comment here upon the curious fact of the excision of this book, from the catalogue of Reference, and its removal from the shelves of the library at this most unopportune moment, when the condition of the British Museum is attracting special attention. I have merely to request that it may be in the ordinary way, at the disposal of those readers who may wish to consult it.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. Winter Jones, Esq.

STEFAN POLES.

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British Museum, Feb. 2, 1875.

SIR,—I beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of your letter respecting the removal of the Report of the Royal Commission of 1850, from the Reading-Room, and to inform you that the removal of which you complain, was effected more than twelve months ago. I shall be happy to give you any facilities in my power, in carrying out the object of your inquires.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

Stefan Poles, Esq.

J. WINTER JONES.

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20, Great Marlborough Street, Feb. 3, 1875.

SIR,—The object of my letter was to call your attention to an irregularity, and not to solicit the favour of your co-operation in my inquiry.

I am not disposed to think that you could assist me in the line of investigation, which has been forced upon me, and if you could, it would not be fair to ask you, seeing that my conclusions may be unpleasant to you.

The time for "giving me facilities in your power," was past for you when you refused me the justice which you had once almost persuaded yourself to promise.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. Winter Jones, Esq.

STEFAN POLES.

## C

The Assistant to the Secretaries of the Treasury—to the Trustees.

Treasury Chambers, March 28, 1873.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—The Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury have had before them two letters from Mr. Winter Jones, dated the 4th instant, submitting recommendations for the grant of increases of salary to the Principal Librarian and Secretary, and to various other officers of your establishment, and they desire me to say that, after giving their most careful consideration to all the statements put before them, they regret that they would not feel warranted in acceding to any alteration in the present scale of salaries.

I have, &c., (signed) William Shaw.

The Trustees of the British Museum,  
&c. &c. &c.

The Principal Librarian to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury.

British Museum, March 4, 1873.

MY LORDS.—Referring to the letter which I have had the honour to address to your Lordships by direction of the Trustees of the British Museum, transmitting to your Lordships a Report of the Sub-Committee of Finance on the subject of the salaries of the officers and others employed in the British Museum, I am instructed to acquaint your Lordships that at the meeting of the Standing Committee, held on the 22nd of February, at which that Report was considered, the following Resolution, moved by the Earl of Stanhope and seconded by Sir David Dundas, was adopted :—

“The Lords of the Treasury will observe that this Report refers only to the heads of departments, and other inferior officers of the establishment, and does not touch the case of their chief, the Principal Librarian; that case had best, perhaps be considered separately.

“The present salary of Mr. Winter Jones is £800 as Principal Librarian, and £400 as Secretary; two offices which the Trustees think it most important to continue combined.

“Looking to the importance of the office, and to the very large increase during the last few years in its duties, the Trustees are of opinion that an augmentation of £200 on the joint salary might justly and properly be made.”

This Resolution having also been carefully considered by the Trustees at the special general meeting held on the 1st instant, was adopted, and I have been directed to forward it to your Lordships' favourable consideration.

I have, &c.. (signed) J. Winter Jones.

The Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of  
Her Majesty's Treasury.

